

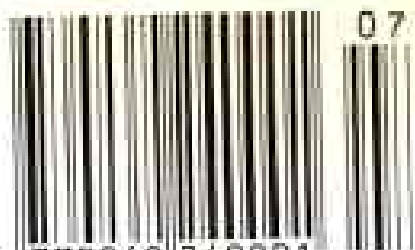
STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 262

32p



COBRA



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07

We at "Starblazer" want to bring you the very best in Fantasy Fiction. To do that we need *your* help.

So that we can produce the kind of stories you want to read, please fill in the questionnaire on this page and send it to "Starblazer", D. C. Thomson & Co. Ltd., 185 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2HS.

If you don't want to cut your issue of "Starblazer", you can copy the questionnaire onto a sheet of paper.

And there's a chance to win a full-colour print of one of our new-style wraparound covers!

The senders of the ten letters which we judge to be the most informative will each receive one of the prints. We want to hear from you NOW!

Name **Age**

Address

What kind of science fiction do you most enjoy? Please tick appropriate boxes. If you dislike any type of story, place a cross in the box.

SUPERHEROES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	FANTASY
DUNGEONS			SWORD AND
AND DRAGONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SORCERY
POST	<input type="checkbox"/>		HORROR
HOLOCAUST	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	STAR WARS
ADVENTURE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DR. WHO
HUMOUR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MYSTERY

Where do you normally buy your STARBLAZER? _____

Which is your favourite STARBLAZER story? _____

Which is your favourite character? _____

Which is your favourite science fiction movie? _____

Have you any comments to make about STARBLAZER... good or bad? _____

COBRA

AD 2239. SOLEOUS PRIME WAS A THRIVING SPACEPORT SERVING INTERSTELLAR TRADE ROUTES ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE GALAXY. SPANNING AN ENTIRE CONTINENT, SHADSAR, ITS CAPITAL, WAS HOME TO MILLIONS OF BEINGS, MOSTLY HUMAN.



SHADSAR WAS LIKE A VAST LIVING ORGANISM. ARMIES OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES CONTROLLED ITS ENVIRONMENT, BUILT AND MAINTAINED ITS STRUCTURE, AND NOURISHED THE SOCIETY INHABITING IT.



BESIDES THE REGULAR LAWMEN WHO PROTECTED THE MEGOPOLIS THERE WAS A DEPARTMENT THAT DIDN'T EXIST OFFICIALLY — MEN WHO DID THE DIRTIEST JOB OF ALL ...



IDENTIFICATION VERIFIED, TAYLOR. TATO ZULT AND JED SMITT PLUS ONE UNKNOWN. COMMENCE TERMINATION OPERATION.

PLEASURE DOIN' BUSINESS. HAVE A NICE DAY! HA, HAI

HEADLIGHTS SUDDENLY ILLUMINATED THE SCENE —

WHAT IN — ?
LAWMAN!

N-NO —
WORSE THAN THAT —

IT WAS DAVE TAYLOR, CODENAME COBRA 17.



AS SWIFT AND DEADLY AS THE REPTILE
FROM WHICH THEY TOOK THEIR NAME
COBRA AGENTS STALKED AND ELIMINATED
THEIR TARGETS AIDED BY ONBOARD
SENSORY COMPUTER UNITS.


79% PROBABILITY OF
COUNTER ATTACK IN
LOW VISIBILITY
LOCALITY, 17.

RELAX, CONTROL. I'VE
HAD EIGHT YEARS AT
THIS GAME. THEY
COUNT FOR QUITE A
BIT.

MOVE RIGHT ...


AND KICK!

ASSAILANT
NULLIFIED! PRIME
TARGET
ESCAPING ...



YOU'RE NOT ON MY
DEATH LIST, FRIEND.
THIS TIME ...

MOMENTS LATER —




IT WILL BE DAYBREAK
SOON. ALL THE SAME,
GIVE ME NIGHTSIGHT,
CONTROL —

IMAGE INTENSIFICATION
SYSTEM OPERATIVE —

— AND GROUND
TRACKING MODE —

— INFRA RED DETECTION
SYSTEM ACTIVATED.

TAYLOR'S INFRA RED VIEWER
GAVE HIM A HEAT PICTURE OF
THE ALLEY WHICH SHOWED THE
MINUTE CHANGES IN GROUND
TEMPERATURE CAUSED BY THE
FUGITIVE'S PASSING.



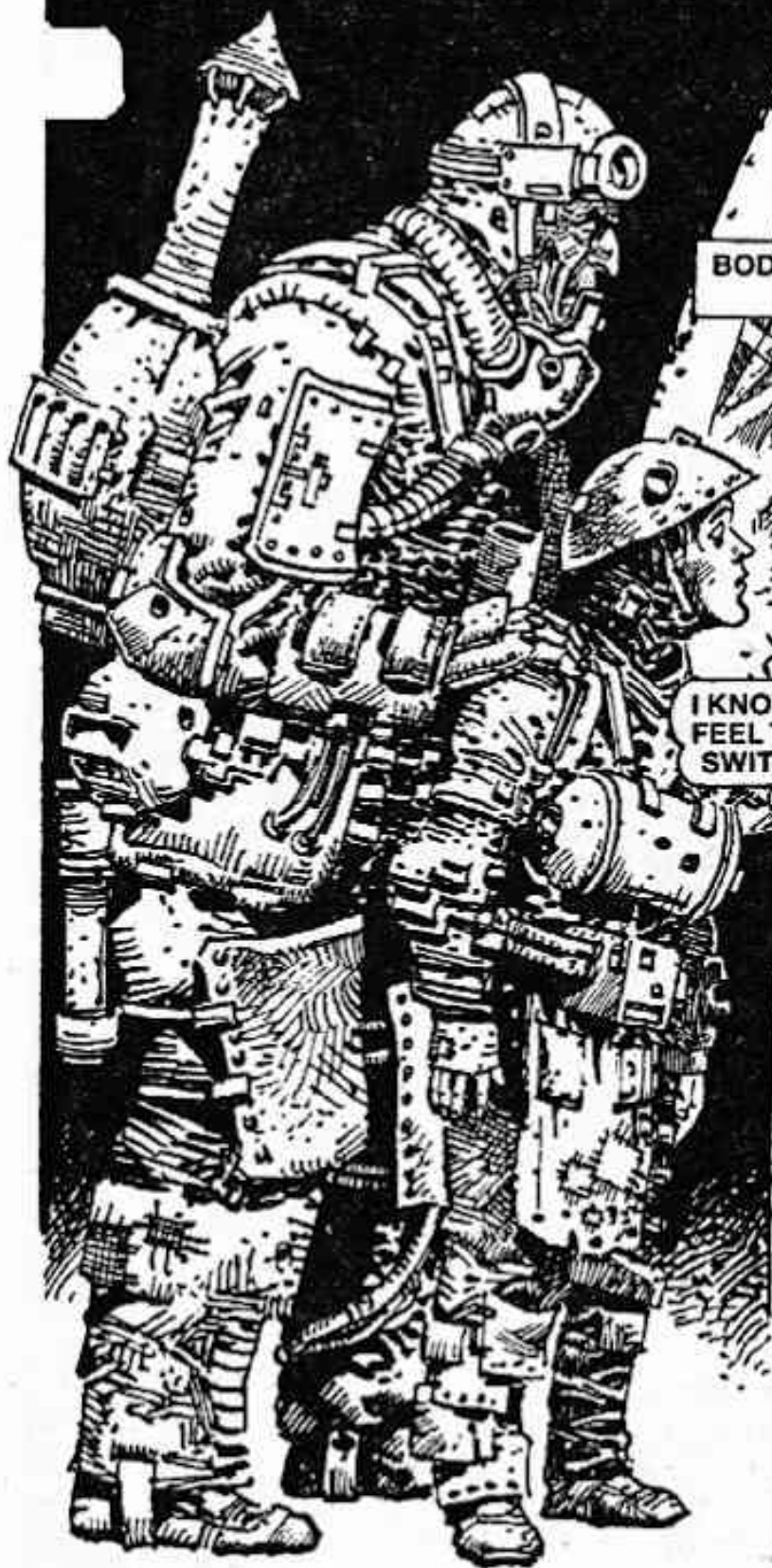
GOT HIM! SCAN WELL
AHEAD FOR BODY HEAT
SOURCES, CONTROL, IN
CASE HE DOUBLES
BACK.

AS DAWN BRIGHTENED THE HORIZON THE TRAIL ENDED IN A PART OF THE MEGOPOLIS THE AUTHORITIES PREFERRED TO IGNORE.

JUNK CITY! FLUSHING HIM OUT OF THERE WON'T BE EASY.



TAYLOR MADE HIS WAY DOWN INTO THE GRIM PLACE.



BODY HEAT AT MULTIPLE
LOCATIONS, 17.

I KNOW, CONTROL. I CAN
FEEL THEIR EYES ON ME.
SWITCH TO MOVEMENT
LOCATER.

BUT SUDDENLY —



ALERT, 17.

ARMOUR TOOK
THE IMPACT.

THE HUNTER WENT AFTER HIS PREY.



MOMENTS LATER AS THE ECHOES
FROM THE METAL AVALANCHE
DIED AWAY ...

YOU ARE HURT, 17.
SENSORS DETECT —

NOTHING TERMINAL,
CONTROL. BY SOME
MIRACLE I ESCAPED
BEING THE FILLING IN A
METAL SANDWICH. BUT
I'M TRAPPED. THE GAP
IS TOO SMALL TO
SQUEEZE THROUGH.

HELP! YOU CAN MOVE IT
IF YOU WORK TOGETHER.
HELP ME ...

BUT TO THE PEOPLE OF JUNK
CITY THE INTRUDER WAS JUST
ANOTHER DESPISED LACKEY OF
THE AUTHORITIES THAT HAD
ABANDONED THEM ...

DAMN THEM! I'LL HELP
MYSELF THEN. GIVE ME
ADRENALIN CONTROL.
WHAT MY BODY IS
PRODUCING
NATURALLY WE CAN
BOOST!

MOMENTS LATER, A
COMBINATION OF SHEER RAGE
AND STIMULANT GAVE HIM THE
EXTRA STRENGTH HE NEEDED —

IT'S MOVING!



TAYLOR EASED HIMSELF FREE.

COBRA 17 FREE, CONTROL.
TERMINATION ACCOMPLISHED.

REVERT TO STAND-BY STATUS.

STAND-BY. FOR DAVE TAYLOR THAT MEANT LEADING
THE LIFE OF A NORMAL CITIZEN, OR AS NEAR AS HE
COULD BE TO IT —

THIS SUB-ZERO SPRAY WILL
STIMULATE THE BLOOD SUPPLY
AND ACCELERATE THE
HEALING PROCESS.

TIME TO RESTORE A BODY TO
THE PEAK OF CONDITION ...

YOU'RE A BIT LACK-LUSTRE
TODAY, EH, DAVE!

PRESSURE OF WORK, CORD.

BUT INEVITABLY,
TWO WEEKS LATER.

ASSUME OPERATIONAL
STATUS, COBRA 17.
STAND BY FOR MISSION
BRIEFING.



DURING ALL THE TIME TAYLOR HAD SERVED AS A COBRA HE HAD NEVER MET THOSE WHO DIRECTED HIM. ALL CONTACT WAS THROUGH THE CONTROL UNITS IN HIS APARTMENT AND HELMET FROM WHICH THE EMOTIONLESS VOICE CAME. BUT AS THE DATA APPEARED —

ARTHUR DANT? I KNOW THIS MAN. THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE?

CONTROL DOES NOT MAKE MISTAKES, COBRA 17.

B-BUT ARTHUR IS AS LAW ABIDING AS THEY COME. I INSIST THE TERMINATION ORDER IS SUSPENDED PENDING —

LAW ABIDING CITIZENS DON'T KILL TWO OFFICERS WHILST RESISTING ARREST, COBRA 17. COMMENCE TERMINATION!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT. I REFUSE —

REFUSAL TO OBEY IS CLASSIFIED AS A HOSTILE ACT, 17. TERMINATION WILL BE AUTHORISED ... FOR YOU!

THEN I HAVE NO CHOICE ...

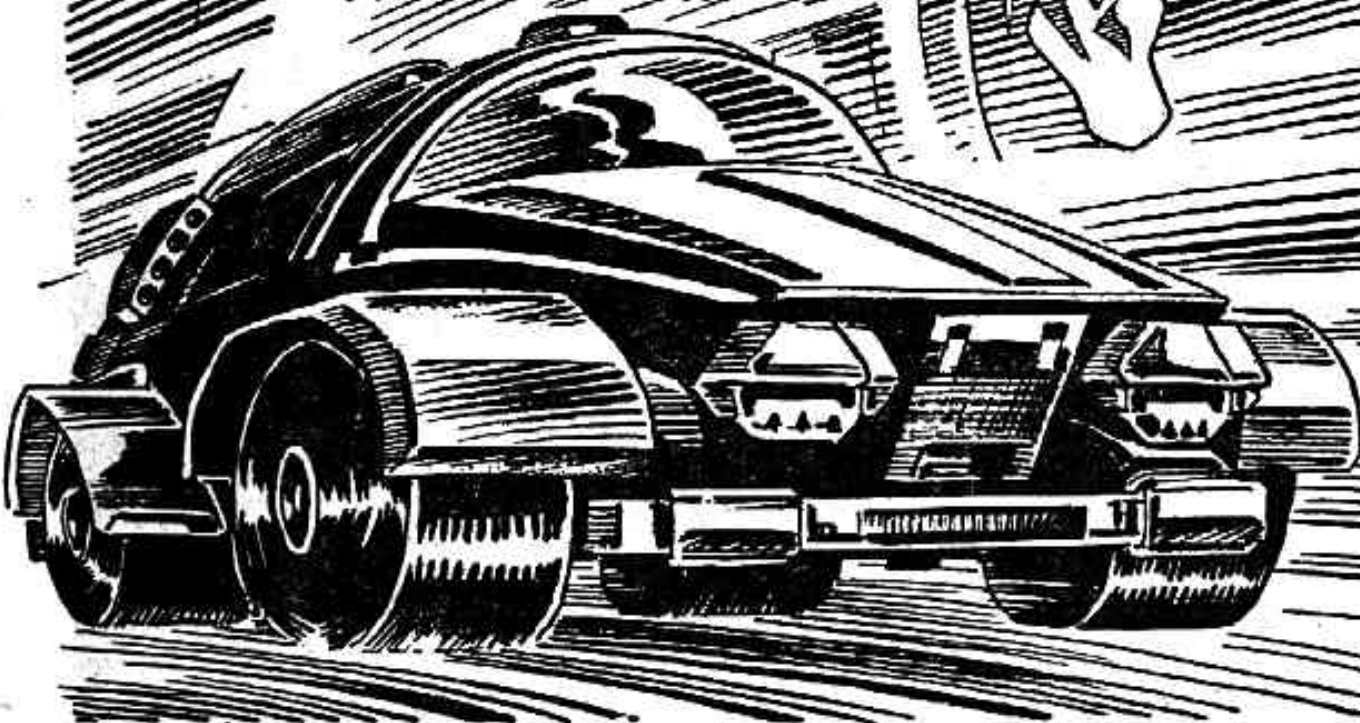


TAYLOR STARED AT A PICTURE ... A PICTURE OF A RUNNING TEAM THAT INCLUDED BOTH DANT AND TAYLOR.

VERY SENSIBLE, 17. YOUR LOYALTY TO A FRIEND WAS COMMENDABLE BUT MISPLACED. PREPARED TO RECEIVE DATA ...

AND SO ...

THIS IS INSANE. ARTHURR
IS NO KILLER. THERE MUST
BE AN EXPLANATION —
MISTAKEN IDENTITY —
WRONG DATA INPUT.
SOMEHOW I'LL SORT IT ...



BUT AS TAYLOR REACHED THE
APARTMENT HE HAD VISITED SO OFTEN
IN THE PAST, AS A WELCOME GUEST ...

DESERTED! GIVE ME A
HEAT SCAN, CONTROL.

MEASUREMENT OF
HEAT TRACE RESIDUE
INDICATES NO ONE HAS
BEEN IN THE
APARTMENT FOR 20
TIME UNITS.



THE QUARRY WAS AWAY AND RUNNING . . .

ARTHURR IS OUT THERE
SOMEWHERE. THERE IS NO WAY HE
CAN ESCAPE CONTROL —
NOWHERE HE CAN HIDE!



DAYS PASSED WHILE TAYLOR WAITED FOR THE FATEFUL COMMUNICATION THAT WOULD SEAL THE FATE OF HIS FRIEND.

ARTHUR'S GONE TO GROUND. HE COULD BE ANYWHERE. BUT THEY'LL FIND HIM — THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN STAY HIDDEN FROM CONTROL'S SENSORY NET FOREVER...

TAYLOR KNEW HOW RESOURCEFUL THE ORGANISATION WOULD BE. EVENTUALLY—

PING

A POSITIVE CONTACT!
DANT IS LOCATED!

MOMENTS LATER COBRA 17 WAS MOBILISED.



ARTHURR MADE A FATAL MISTAKE IN TRYING TO DRAW MONEY. HIS CARD HAS NOW BEEN SPECIALLY ENERGISED — A BEACON LEADING ME TO HIM.

AND, AS HE CLOSED IN ON HIS QUARRY.

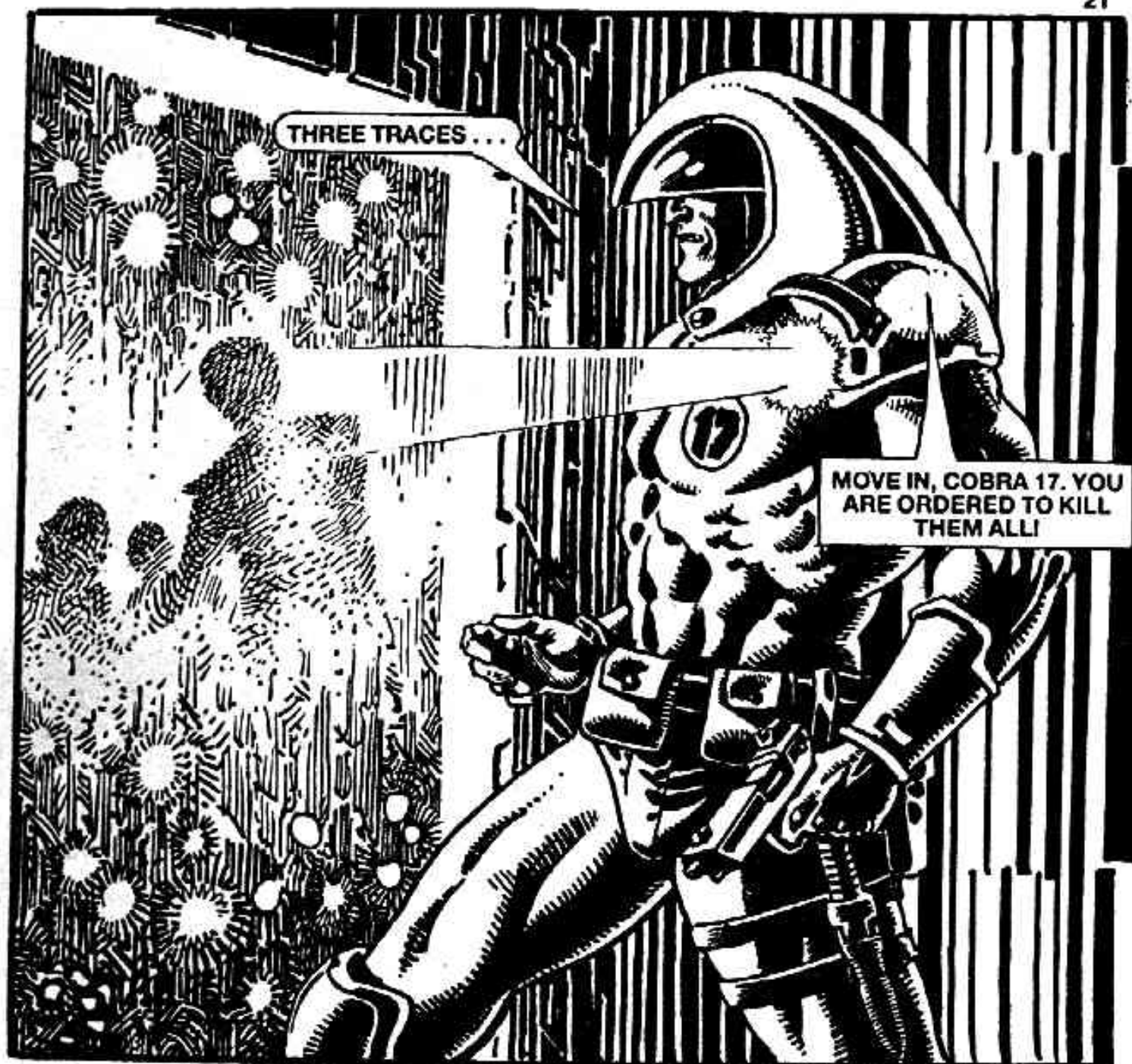
TARGET WITHIN FIVE METRES, COBRA 17.



I STILL CAN'T SEE ARTHURR AS A KILLER. IT'S ALL INSANE...

SMILE, SLIME!

GIVE ME THERMAL IMAGE OF THE ROOM, CONTROL.





I... I KNOW YOU.
DAVE... DAVE TAYLOR?


COMMENCE
TERMINATION,
COBRA 17.
IMMEDIATELY.

THIS ISN'T A DRUG-
PUSHING GUTTER RAT,
CONTROL!! JUST AN
ORDINARY CITIZEN
SCARED OUT OF HIS
WITS!! IT MUST BE A
MISTAKE!

EXECUTE
TERMINATION, COBRA
17 — THE CHILDREN
TOO — OR FACE THE
CONSEQUENCES...

WITH THAT, SOMETHING
BROKE INSIDE TAYLOR. HE
WRENCHED OFF HIS
HELMET, AND—

DAMN YOU, CONTROL. I
WATCHED THESE KIDS
GROW UP. IT'S
UNTHINKABLE I SHOULD
KILL THEM. THERE'S A LIMIT
TO WHAT EVEN A COBRA
WILL DO!



Y... YOU ARE AN
EXECUTIONER — FOR THE
GOVERNMENT, DAVE? YOU
WERE ORDERED TO KILL US?
THIS IS CRAZY!


SO IS YOU BEING
TARGETTED IN THE FIRST
PLACE, ARTHURR. WHAT
THE HECK IS ALL THIS
ABOUT? WHERE'S ZORA?



WHO
WATCHES
THE
WATCHER?

NO
BIG
BROTHER

A SHADOW PASSED OVER ARTHURR
DANT'S FACE. HE BEGAN TO EXPLAIN.



MY WIFE IS DEAD! THEY TOOK
HER AWAY DURING A
DEMONSTRATION. SHE NEVER
CAME BACK. THE WORD IS THAT
SHE DIED DURING
INTERROGATION.



THEN THEY CAME FOR US. THEY
SAID WE WERE INFECTED WITH
HER ANTI-STATE PROPAGANDA.
WE FLED. THE POLICE
MISJUDGED A BEND ...

ZORA DEAD. I CAN
HARDLY BELIEVE IT ...

HER ONLY CRIME
WAS IN SPEAKING
OUT — IN DARING
TO CRITICISE ...

RAGE ERUPTED THROUGH TAYLOR
AND HE DESTROYED HIS ARMOUR.

THEY IMPLIED YOU HAD
MURDERED THOSE TWO
AGENTS. THEY DISTORTED
THE FACTS TO MAKE ME
KILL YOU. I TRUSTED
CONTROL AND I BELIEVED
IN WHAT I WAS DOING. I
WAS USED.

COBR-DZZZZTTTTT ...

WE MUST GET OUT OF HERE
IMMEDIATELY. CONTROL
WILL LOSE NO TIME IN
BRINGING IN MORE AGENTS
TO FINISH THE JOB.

FIRST, I'LL GET RID OF
THIS ENERGISED CASH
CARD. I'M KEEPING MY
WEAPONS — I'VE A
FEELING I'LL BE
NEEDING THEM!

MOMENTS LATER—



AS THEY REACHED THE
GROUND FLOOR—

BY THE STARS, THEY'RE
HERE ALREADY. A
SPECIAL EXECUTION
SQUAD.

TAYLOR HAD NO HESITATION IN
DEALING WITH THE KILLING
SQUAD.

MEN LIKE YOU
WERE ONCE MY
COLLEAGUES.
NOW, I REGRET,
WE'RE ENEMIES!



TAYLOR DEALT WITH THE LAST COBRA—


THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE.
MY FLIER IS NEARBY. BUT
FIRST —

AFTER SUBMITTING THE FALSE REPORT,
DAVE, DANT AND HIS CHILDREN FLED.

OPERATIVE 2557
REPORTING COMPLETION
OF ASSIGNMENT. COBRA 17
AND TARGETS TERMINATED
SUCCESSFULLY.

THAT SHOULD BUY
US SOME TIME.

IN THE MEANTIME WE GET
AS FAR AWAY AS POSSIBLE,
EH, DAVE?



WRONG, ARTHUR.
THAT WOULD BE THE
NATURAL THING FOR
FUGITIVES TO DO —
WHAT CONTROL WILL
ANTICIPATE.
REMEMBER I AM —
ER — WAS A COBRA.

HYPER-HAWKS
VS.
CITY-BARBANS

INSTEAD WE DO THE MOST
EFFECTIVE VANISHING
TRICK THERE IS — LOSING
OURSELVES AMONG LOTS
OF PEOPLE. I KNOW JUST
THE PLACE...

GOOD GRIEF. THE
MEGABALL MATCH!

TAYLOR'S FLIER WAS LEFT IN
A SECLUDED ALLEYWAY —

WE MUST TRY TO BLEND
IN WITH THE CROWD.

DADDY!



TAYLOR REACTED LIKE THE FINELY-TUNED
COMBAT MACHINE HE WAS.





MOMENTS LATER—

EVEN WITH A PUNK SUIT ON
I'M LESS CONSPICUOUS.
WE'LL JOIN THE TIDE. WITH
LUCK IT WILL BE SOME
TIME BEFORE THEY LOCATE
THE FLIER.



THEY REACHED THE UNDERGROUND TRANSPORT SYSTEM.

KEEPING ONE STEP AHEAD
OF CONTROL IS GOING TO
BE TRICKY. THEY HAVE THE
MOST SOPHISTICATED
SYSTEMS THERE ARE —
STUFF YOU CAN HARDLY
IMAGINE —

THEN WHAT'S THE POINT IN
RUNNING? WHEREVER WE
GO IN THE WORLD THEY'RE
GOING TO FIND US ...



THAT LEAVES ONLY ONE
OPTION — WE GO OFF-PLANET.

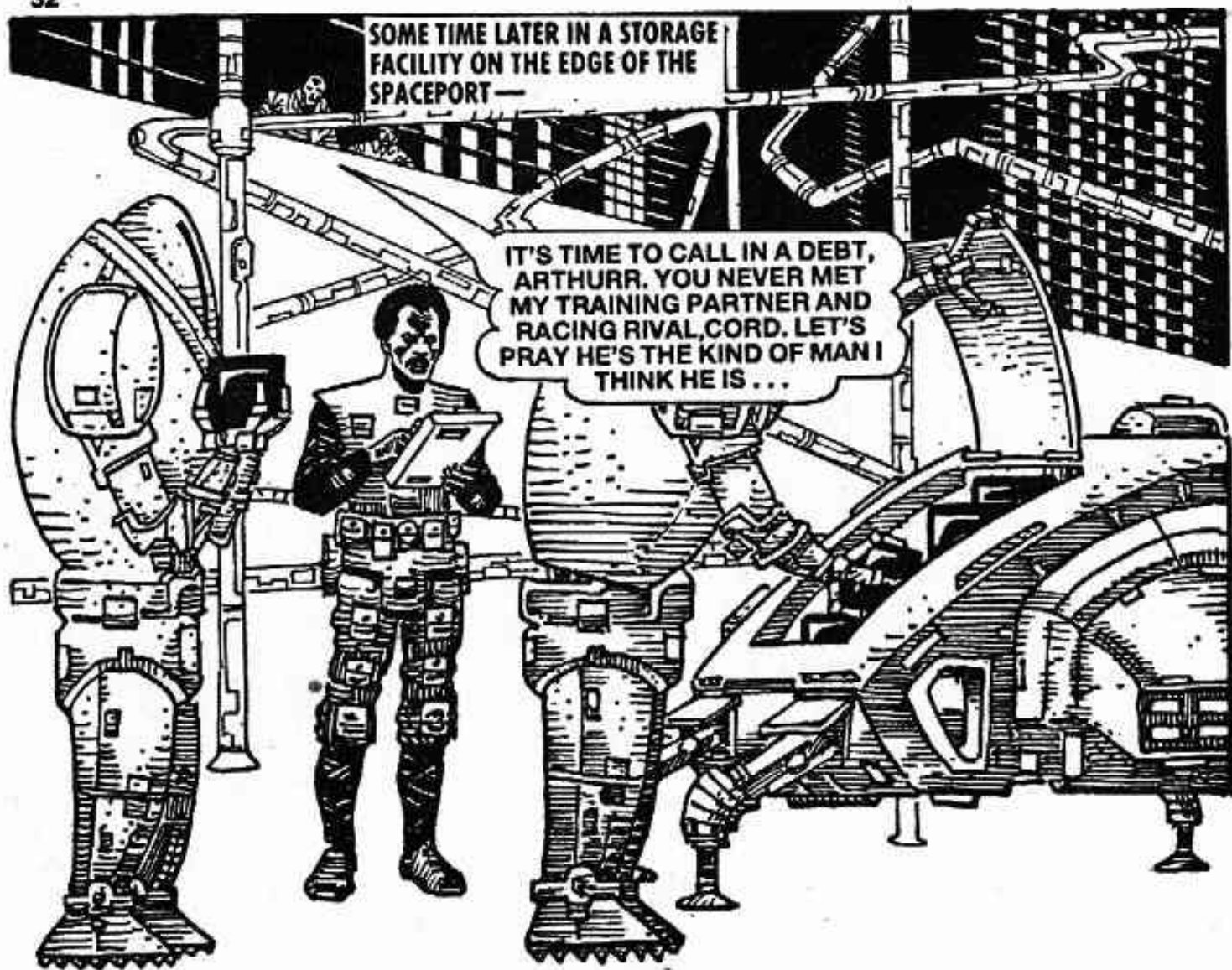
WHAT? BUT ...

YOU GOT A BETTER
IDEA?



SOME TIME LATER IN A STORAGE FACILITY ON THE EDGE OF THE SPACEPORT —

IT'S TIME TO CALL IN A DEBT, ARTHURR. YOU NEVER MET MY TRAINING PARTNER AND RACING RIVAL, CORD. LET'S PRAY HE'S THE KIND OF MAN I THINK HE IS ...



LEAVING DANT AND THE CHILDREN HIDDEN, TAYLOR SLID LIKE A SHADOW OVER THE WALL AND INTO THE WAREHOUSE—

UH? DAVE?

I NEED YOUR HELP, CORD. I, AND THREE OTHERS, NEED TO GET OFF-PLANET. OUR LIVES DEPEND ON IT ...



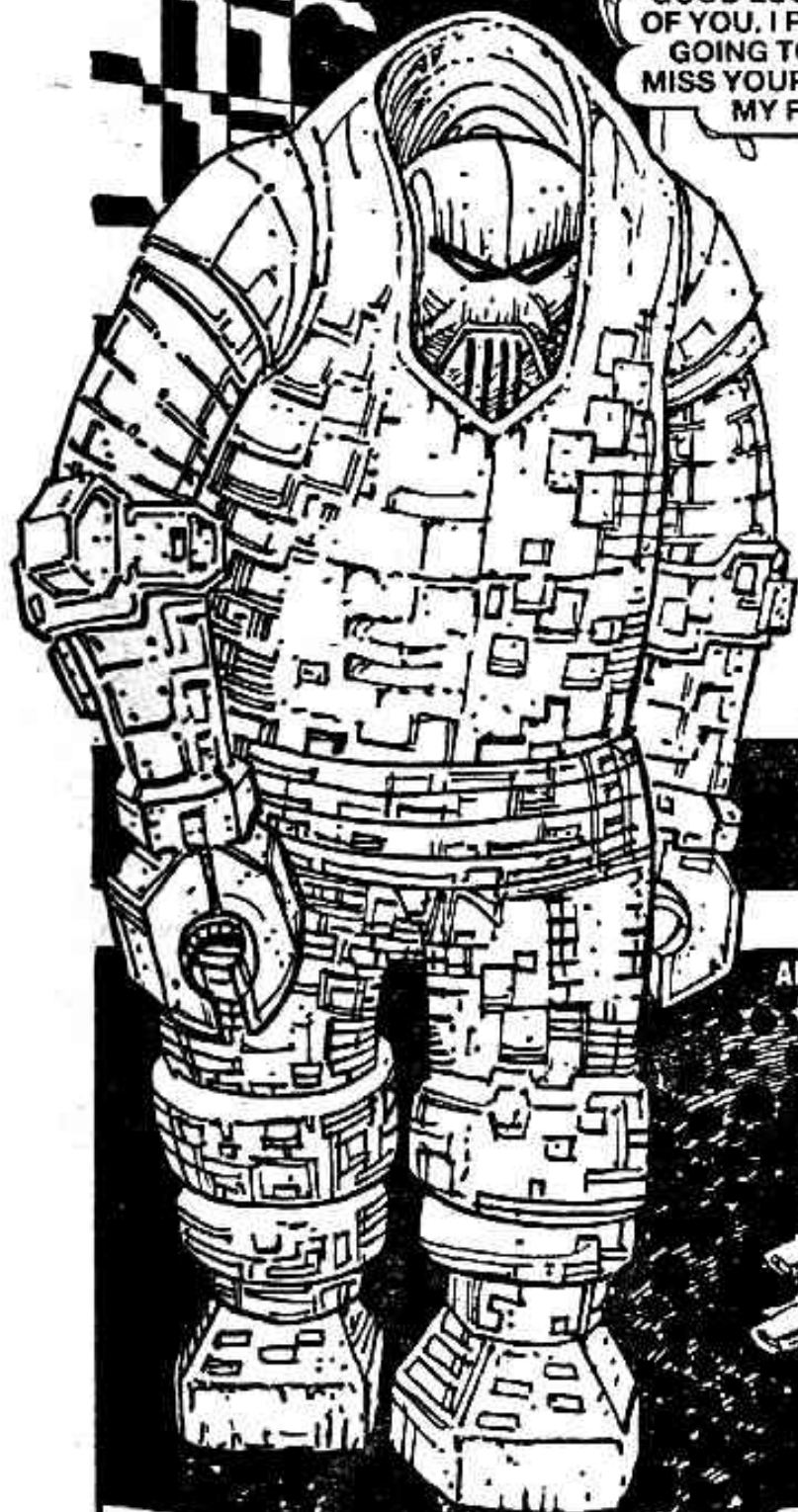
YOU SAVED MY LIFE IN THE MALKRON 3 MEGAMARATHON, DAVE. SMUGGLING YOU ABOARD THE NEXT FREIGHTER TO MULTIWAYS IS THE LEAST I CAN DO — BESIDES CHANGING THOSE TERRIBLE CLOTHES FOR YOU!



LATER THAT DAY—

GOOD LUCK, DAVE — ALL
OF YOU. I RECKON YOU'RE
GOING TO NEED IT. I'LL
MISS YOUR COMPETITION,
MY FRIEND . . .

KEEP UP THE TRAINING,
CORD. I'LL BE BACK —
SOMEHOW — SOMEDAY . . .



AND, AS THE MIGHTY CRAFT THUNDERED INTO SPACE . . .

WE MADE IT!
WE'VE ESCAPED!



DON'T THINK WE CAN RELAX
YET, ARTHURR. GETTING THIS
FAR WAS THE EASY BIT!


THE HOME WORLD DWINDLED UNTIL IT WAS A MERE SPECK, AND THE FREIGHTER NEARED MULTIWAYS, A VAST COMMERCIAL WORLD, AND CROSSROADS —



WELCOME BACK TO MULTIWAYS, FREIGHTER ZX232. YOU ARE GREEN FOR DOCKING AT BAY ALPHA ZERO . . .

ROGER, MULTI. COMMENCING ENTRY.

THE FREIGHTER PASSED INTO ONE OF THE VAST BERTHS WITHIN THE MASSIVE SPACE CITY—



HOW DO WE GET OUT OF HERE DAVE?

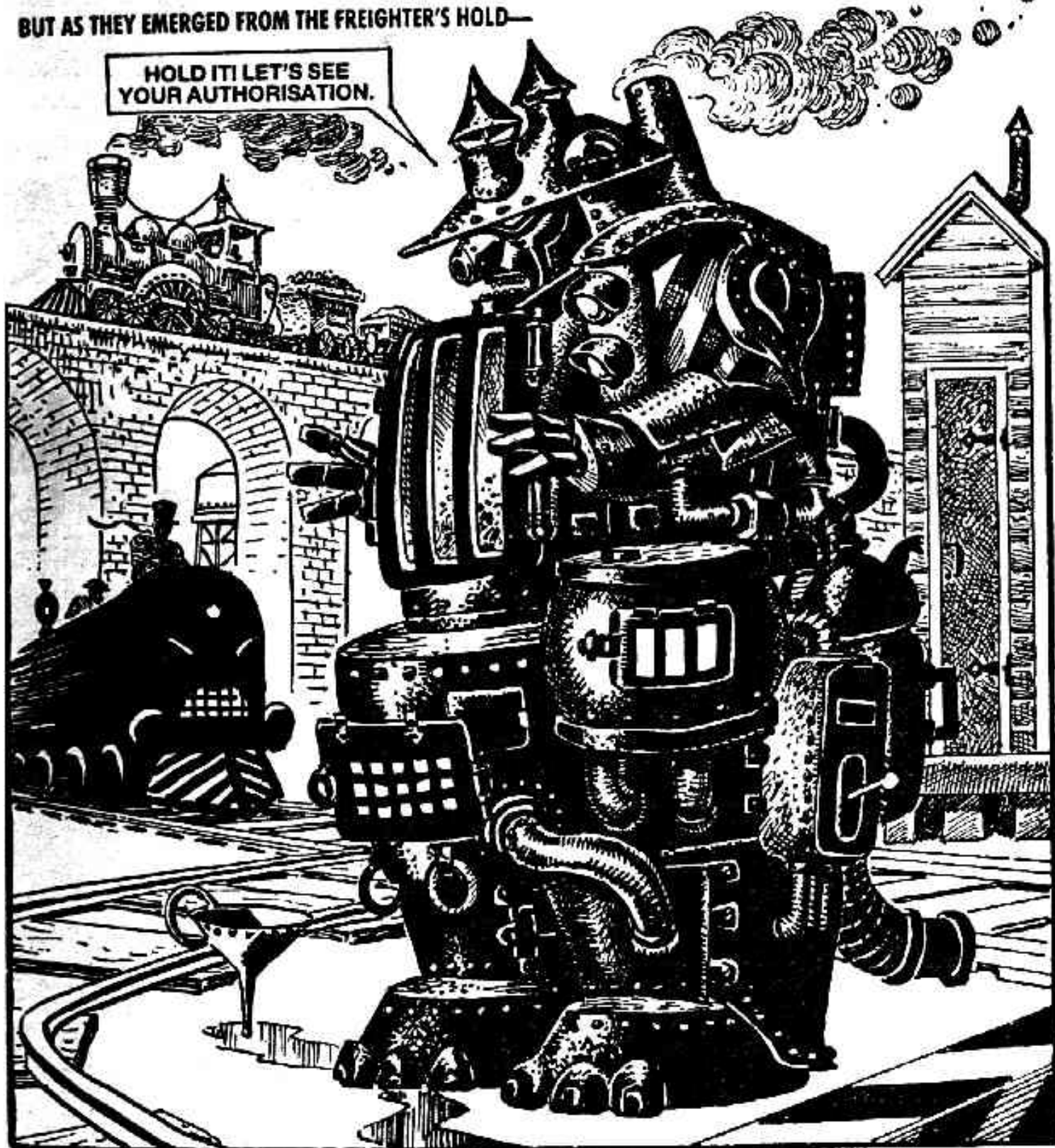
BY LOOKING LIKE WE BELONG HERE, BLEND IN . . .

DAVE COMMANDEERED ONE OF
THE MANY ROBO-CARRIERS.

SMUGGLING THE CHILDREN
THROUGH IN THIS
CONTAINER WE'VE
EMPTIED IS OUR ONLY
CHANCE.

BUT AS THEY EMERGED FROM THE FREIGHTER'S HOLD—

HOLD IT! LET'S SEE
YOUR AUTHORIZATION.

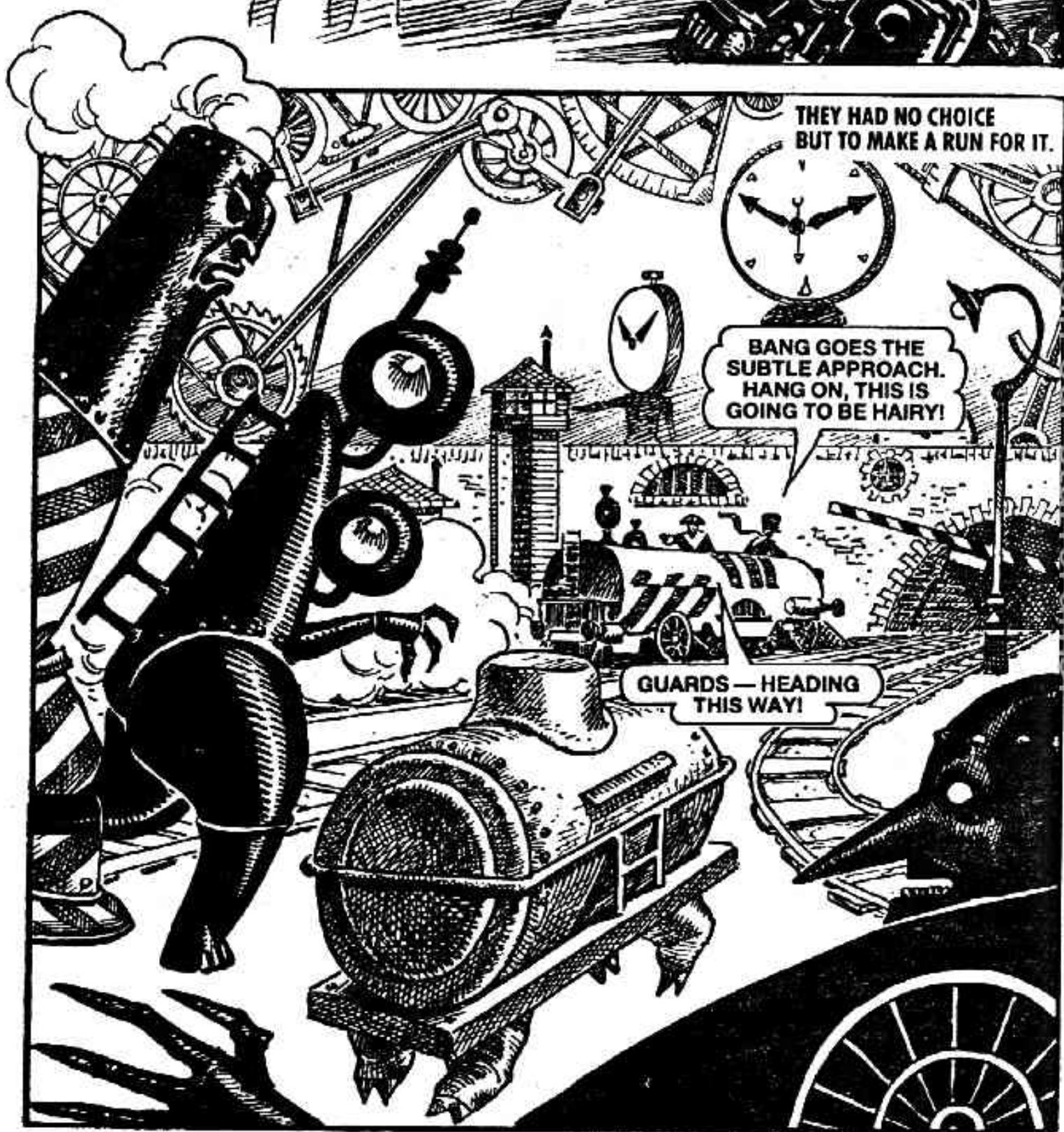


AUTHORISATION?
WILL THIS DO?

THEY HAD NO CHOICE
BUT TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT.

BANG GOES THE
SUBTLE APPROACH.
HANG ON, THIS IS
GOING TO BE HAIRY!

GUARDS — HEADING
THIS WAY!



THE ROBO-CARRIER HURTLED ACROSS THE DOCK AREA UNTIL DAVE SPIED A LIKELY AVENUE OF ESCAPE.

THAT MAINTENANCE PORT! QUICK. GET THE CHILDREN INSIDE.

LOOK OUT!



THE CARRIER CRASHED TO A HALT. AS DANT HELPED HIS CHILDREN CLEAR, DAVE TURNED TO FACE THEIR PURSUERS.



BY THE STARS!
DOWN!

THAT SHOULD
STOP THEM IN
THEIR TRACKS FOR
A MOMENT.

BUT AS DAVE DARTED
FOR THE SAFETY OF THE
HATCHWAY—

DAVE! OH, NO ...

GET BA — ARGH!

TAYLOR STUMBLED
THROUGH THE
HATCHWAY, FIGHTING
THE PAIN THAT
CLOUDED HIS EYES.

GOT TO GET ...
DOOR CLOSED ...

THE DOOR SLID SHUT—



NO ONE WILL GET IN
HERE IN A HURRY.
LET'S MAKE THE MOST
OF THE ADVANTAGE.

THIS IS ALL PART OF
THE INTRICATE MAZE
OF SERVICE TUNNELS
AND CONDUITS THAT
LINK EVERY PART OF
THE CITY. THE PERFECT
HIDING PLACE...

WHERE ARE WE GOING?
WHERE CAN WE GO?

SOMETHING MUST BE DONE,
CHAIRMAN! THESE SMUGGLERS
GET MORE AUDACIOUS. I DEMAND
MORE MANPOWER IS DIVERTED TO
DOCK SECURITY.

EVEN AS THE FUGITIVES PENETRATED
DEEP INTO THE METAL LABYRINTH,
CHAIRMAN PRANDOR, THE SUPREME
ADMINISTRATOR OF MULTIWAYS
WAS RECEIVING A REPORT ON THE
INCIDENT.



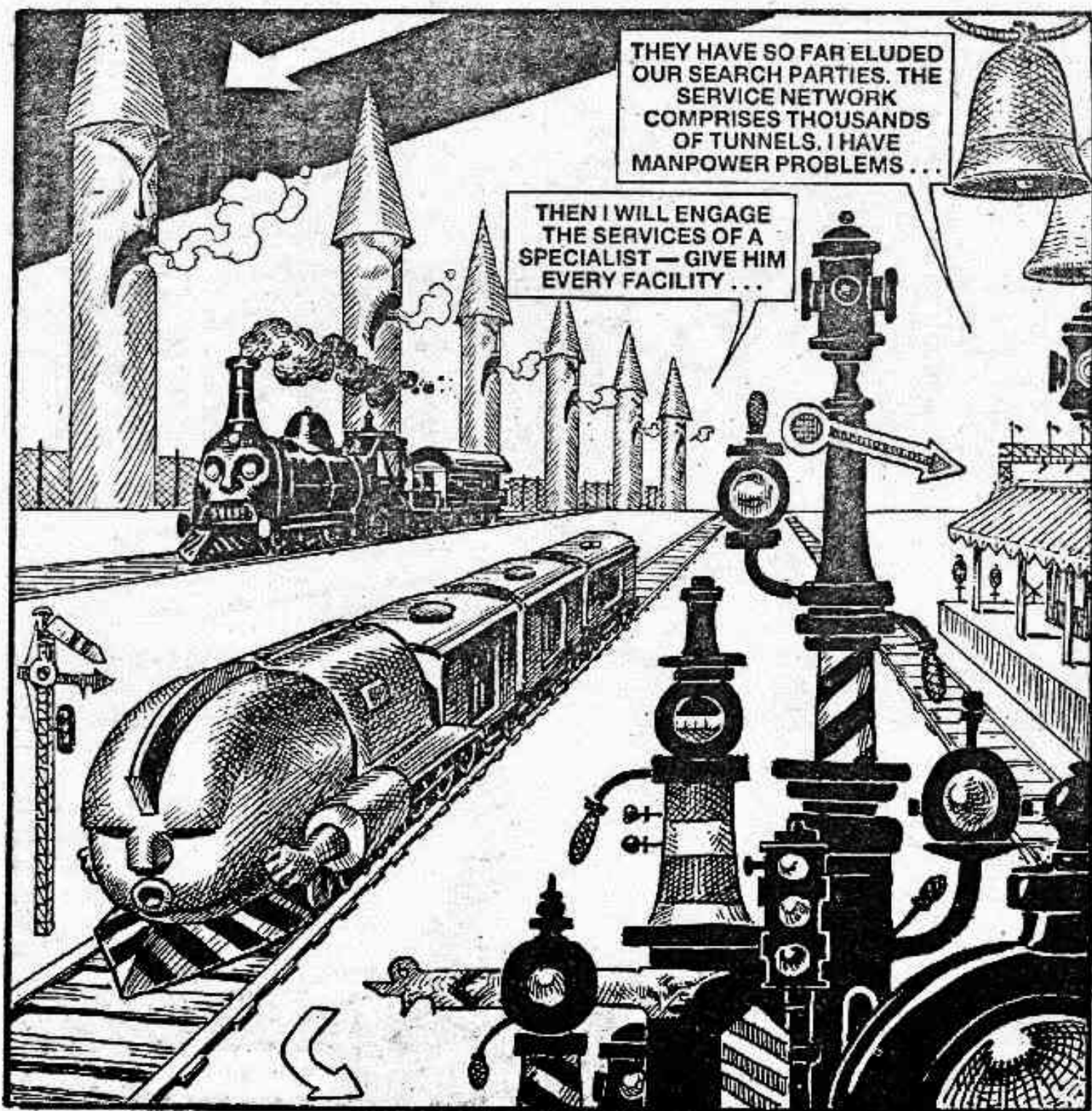
SMUGGLERS, EH? I WONDER...
THE GUN THEY DROPPED IS OF
AN UNUSUAL DESIGN. RUN A
CHECK ON ITS SERIAL NUMBER.

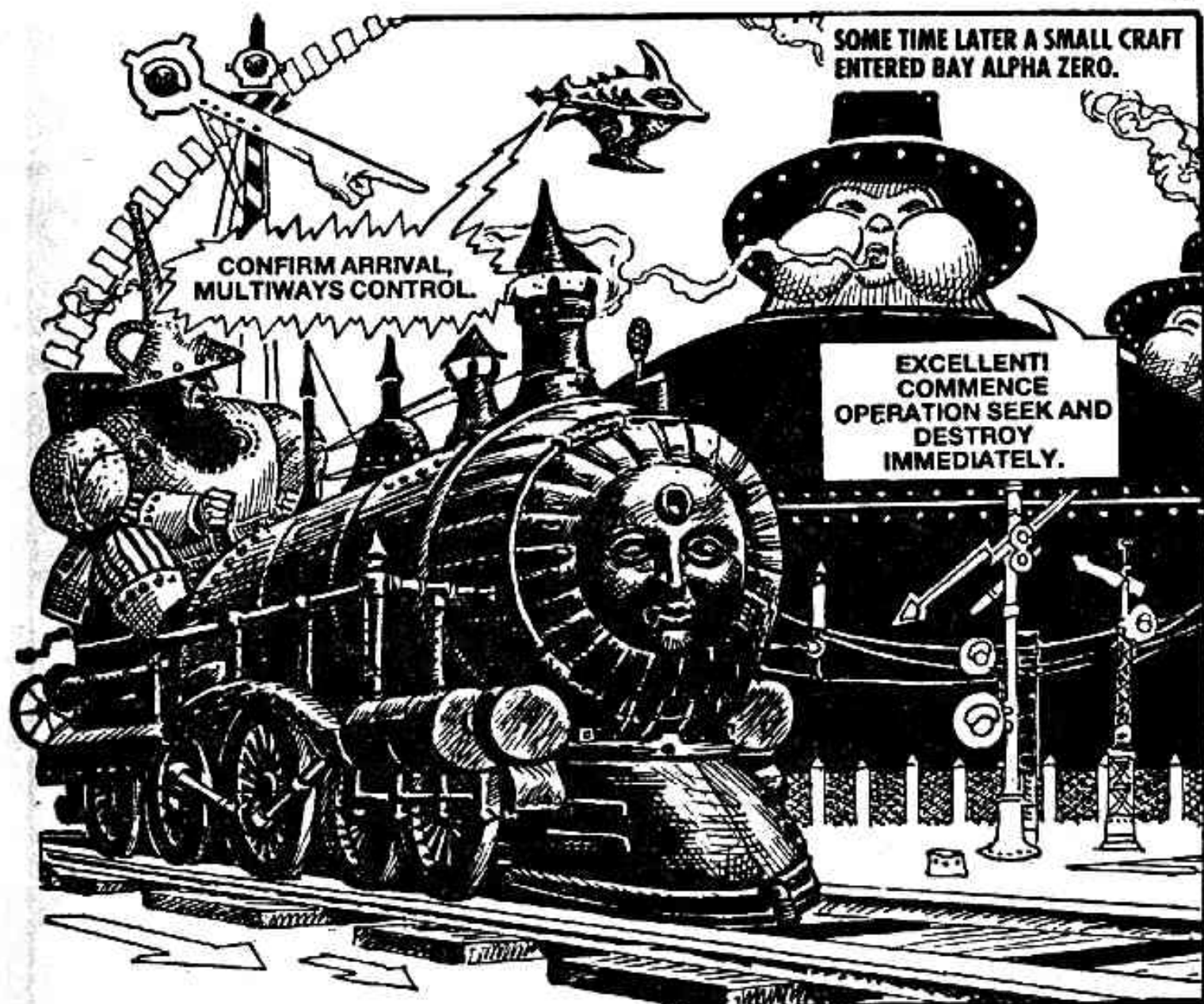
BEFORE LONG THE ANSWER WAS KNOWN
AND A CONNECTION MADE—

SO — TAYLOR HAS
SOMEHOW REACHED
MULTIWAYS. HE AND HIS
CONFEDERATES MUST BE
LOCATED AND DESTROYED
WITHOUT FAIL.

THEY HAVE SO FAR ELUDED
OUR SEARCH PARTIES. THE
SERVICE NETWORK
COMPRISES THOUSANDS
OF TUNNELS. I HAVE
MANPOWER PROBLEMS ...

THEN I WILL ENGAGE
THE SERVICES OF A
SPECIALIST — GIVE HIM
EVERY FACILITY ...





A VLOORG BOUNTY HUNTER EMERGED INTO FULL VIEW.



IT'S THE SPECIALIST!
CHAIRMAN PRANDOR
SAYS HE HAS GOT
SPECIAL AUTHORITY.
WE'RE TO JUST KEEP
OUT OF HIS WAY.

IT'LL BE
A PLEASURE.

STARBLAZER FACTFILE...

Whilst the Terran (now a protected species) has a sense of smell that enables it to locate its prey over a vast distance, the Vloorgan olfactory senses surpass this a thousandfold. Not overly intelligent, they are nonetheless sought after as trackers and as such are the most feared (and highly paid) bounty hunters in the galaxy.

THEY ESCAPED
THROUGH HERE. THEIR
LEADER —

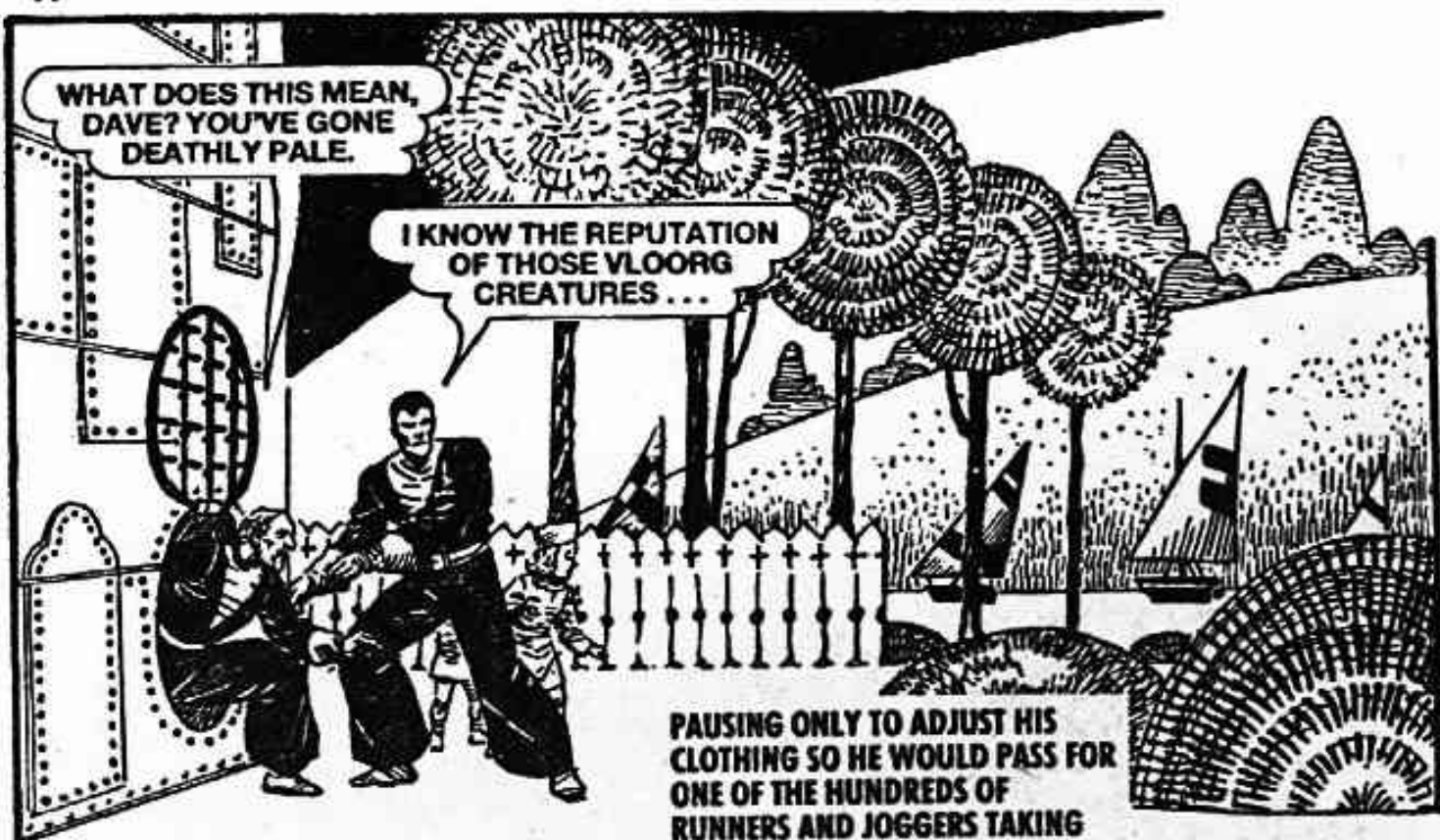
I HAVE HISS SCENT. SSOON
HE WILL BE DEAD...

AS THE VLOORG MADE
AWAY THE CHILL VOICE OF
CONTROL, PATCHED INTO
THE MULTIWAYS PUBLIC
COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM,
MOCKED THE QUARRY.

I KNOW YOU ARE
THERE, TAYLOR.

EVEN AS YOU HEAR ME THE VLOORG
I HAVE COMMISSIONED TO HUNT YOU WILL
BE COMING NEARER. THERE IS NO ESCAPE.

BE AFRAID, DAVE TAYLOR.
BE VERY AFRAID.



PAUSING ONLY TO ADJUST HIS CLOTHING SO HE WOULD PASS FOR ONE OF THE HUNDREDS OF RUNNERS AND JOGGERS TAKING EXERCISE ALL OVER THE CITY, TAYLOR SPED OFF.

THEY THREADED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE DENSE UNDERGROWTH OF THE MAGNIFICENT ARTIFICIAL PARK, UNTIL—






TAYLOR PADDED THROUGH THE COMPLEXES THAT MADE UP THE CITY, KILOMETRE AFTER KILOMETRE, TAKING CARE TO AVOID THE SECURITY PATROLS THAT WOULD ALSO BE ON THE ALERT FOR HIM. KILOMETRE AFTER KILOMETRE—

— ALWAYS AWARE THAT SOMEWHERE BEHIND HIM A MONSTER STALKED.

SOME TIME LATER—



OH MY — THERE HE IS ALREADY. HE'S BULKY BUT SURPRISINGLY LIGHT ON HIS FEET — CRUISING ALONG AT WHAT I WOULD SPRINT AT.



I MUSTN'T KID MYSELF.
WHEREVER I GO HE'LL FIND ME!
OR I'LL BE CAPTURED BY THE
MULTIWAYS HEAVIES. EITHER
WAY CONTROL WILL SEE TO IT
I... WE... DIE.

CUT PRICE DROID
REPAIR WHILE-U-WAIT

CLOSED

THAT LEAVES ME ONE
OTHER OPTION. I STAND
AND FIGHT BUT — WAIT A
MINUTE...

FIGHTING THE PANIC MOUNTING
IN HIM, AND THE IMPULSE TO
KEEP MOVING AT ALL COSTS,
TAYLOR BEGAN TO WORK ON A
DESPERATE PLAN.

THERE'S JUST A CHANCE I
CAN TURN THIS
NIGHTMARE TO OUR
ADVANTAGE. IT'S CRAZY,
BUT IT'S ALL I'VE GOT...

SOME TIME LATER—

PARADISE
PARK

SSOON, TERRAN.
SSOON, HEH, HEH...

TAYLOR SPED ON EVEN THOUGH HIS LEGS
WERE GETTING HEAVIER WITH EVERY
METRE—

DAVE!
WHAT IN — ?

STAY — PANT — HIDDEN.
THERE'S NO — PANT —
TIME TO EXPLAIN...

MOMENTS LATER, AS THE
BEAST FOLLOWED DAVE'S
TRAIL —

SSO CLOSSSS ...

LOOKING FOR
ME, UGLY?

SSSSS!





ARGHHH!



NOW YOU DIE,
TERRAN.

I THINK NOT, VLOORG.
MOVE ANOTHER MUSCLE
AND YOU DIE. AUTO
GRENADE PRIMED. STAY
CLEAR, ARTHURRI!

DANT WATCHED HELPLESSLY AS HIS FRIEND AND THE ALIEN FACED EACH OTHER, FROZEN FOR WHAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY.

DAVE, I —

STAY BACK, ARTHURR. THAT PRETTY PENDANT THE VLOORG IS NOW WEARING IS A HYPER-INCENDIARY GRENADE I MANAGED TO STEAL, WHICH I CAN TRIGGER WITH THIS DEVICE. DO EXACTLY AS I SAY, VLOORG, OR YOU GET A SEVERE CASE OF HEARTBURN!

THE VLOORG IS RETURNING TO ITS SHIP, CHAIRMAN PRANDOR, ITS MISSION COMPLETED. BUT HE HAS PRISONERS — CHILDREN — DO WE —

SOME TIME LATER, IN DOCKING BAY ALPHA ZERO ...

DON'T INTERFERE, DOLT! THE VLOORG IS ACTING FOR SHADSAR CONTROL AND HE HAS BEEN GRANTED DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY. I DON'T WANT AN INTERGALACTIC INCIDENT ON MY HANDS!

UNHINDERED, THE VLOORG MADE FOR ITS SHIP, HESITATING BRIEFLY AT THE FOOT OF THE RAMP —

KEEP GOING! ONE PRESS OF THE BUTTON, AND ...

YOU WOULD DIE TOO, TERRAN PIG.

I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE!

THE VLOORG'S CRAFT BLASTED OFF—

BY THE STARS, WE MADE IT. YOU HAVE GIVEN US THE MEANS TO ESCAPE FROM CONTROL, UGLY. WE OWE YOUR GULLIBILITY A LOT!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, TERRAN SWINE? I DO NOT UNDERSTAND ...



DAVE PILOTED THE CRAFT INTO DEEP SPACE, WELL CLEAR OF THE MAIN TRADE ROUTES. WITH DANT HE SEARCHED THE STAR CATALOGUE FOR A LIKELY HAVEN. FINALLY—

IT SAYS FULL SCALE COLONISATION WAS SCRAPPED. I RECKON IT'S GOING TO BE ROUGH DOWN THERE — HOSTILE, EVEN ...

THE HAARVOD SECTOR — ONE HABITABLE PLANET — VIGO III. ORIGINALLY CLASSSED AS POTENTIAL COLONISATION MATERIAL, BUT—

OUR FUEL SITUATION MAKES IT OUR ONLY OPTION, ARTHURR.

IT'LL BE AN IMPROVEMENT ON WHAT WE LEFT BEHIND, MY FRIEND. ALL THAT MATTERS IS BEING OUT OF CONTROL'S REACH ...

SOME TIME LATER—

DAVE SHUDDERED, FOR HE KNEW HOW RESOURCEFUL CONTROL WAS. THEN HE CONCENTRATED ON THE DESCENT TO THE SURFACE OF VIGO III.

THE ELECTRICAL STORM IS PLAYING HAVOC WITH THE INSTRUMENTS — A PILOT'S NIGHTMARE. BUT THERE'S NO TURNING BACK ...


SUDDENLY THE CRAFT WAS STRUCK BY A MASSIVE CHARGE OF LIGHTNING.

ARGH! SYSTEMS FAILING — ENGINES 2 AND 5 OUT ...

EVEN AS THE CRAFT PLUMMETED ITS EMERGENCY SYSTEMS CUT IN AUTOMATICALLY.

SHE'S RESPONDING. THERE'S A CHANCE WE'LL GET DOWN IN ONE PIECE ... PREPARE YOURSELVES FOR A—





CRASH-LANDING!

SECONDS LATER—

**WE MADE
IT. I—**

**MORE BY LUCK THAN
JUDGEMENT! THE
DISTRESS BEACON WAS
ACTIVATED BY THE AUTO-
SYSTEMS WHEN THEY CUT
IN...**

**AN INSPECTION OF THE SHIP
REVEALED THAT IT WOULD
NEVER FLY AGAIN.**

**WE MUST PRAY
THAT NOBODY
PICKED UP THE
DISTRESS SIGNAL.**

**NO! WE ASSUME
THAT IT WAS!**

MEANWHILE, IN DEEP SPACE...

WE WERE ABLE TO GET A
FIX ON THE SIGNAL,
CONTROL. THE
REGISTRATION CODE
MATCHES THE VLOORG'S
CRAFT...

IT IS AS WELL THE VLOORG
CONTACTED US
IMMEDIATELY — DESTROY
THOSE SCUM — THE BRATS
AS WELL.

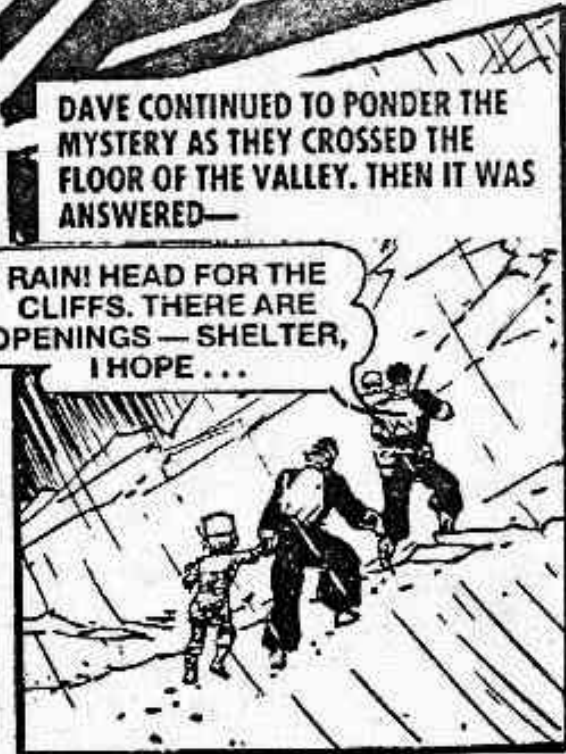
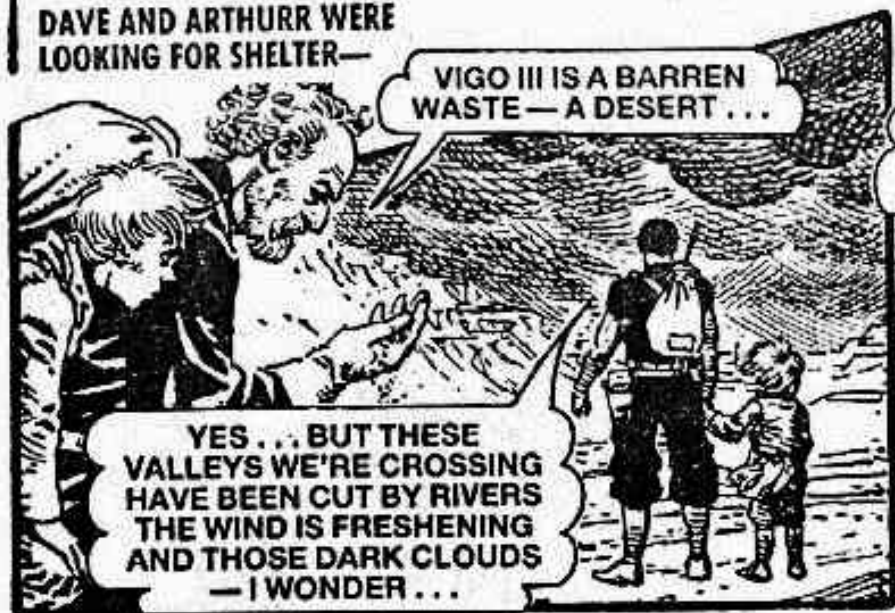
DAVE AND ARTHURR WERE
LOOKING FOR SHELTER—

VIGO III IS A BARREN
WASTE — A DESERT...

YES... BUT THESE
VALLEYS WE'RE CROSSING
HAVE BEEN CUT BY RIVERS
THE WIND IS FRESHENING
AND THOSE DARK CLOUDS
— I WONDER...

DAVE CONTINUED TO PONDER THE
MYSTERY AS THEY CROSSED THE
FLOOR OF THE VALLEY. THEN IT WAS
ANSWERED—

RAIN! HEAD FOR THE
CLIFFS. THERE ARE
OPENINGS — SHELTER,
I HOPE...



LASHED BY RAIN, THEY
STRUGGLED UP THE SLOPE.
YET AS DANT STUMBLED ...

WHAT IN? THE GROUND
IS — ALIVE!

KEEP MOVING OR
WE'LL BE SWEEPED AWAY
IN THE FLOOD ...

IT'S INCREDIBLE!
SEEDS LYING
DORMANT FOR
GOODNESS KNOWS
HOW LONG ARE
GERMINATING —
BURSTING INTO LIFE.

SPARE US THE BOTANY
LESSON. THE WATER IS
RISING FAST, MOVE!

WHAT HAD BEEN A DUSTY RIVER BED
SOON BECAME A TORRENT. DAVE LED HIS
COMPANIONS UP TO THE BASE OF THE
CLIFFS, WHERE—

SUCH EXTREMES —
DESERT — THEN FLOODS.
NO WONDER IT GOT A
THUMBS DOWN FROM THE
COLONISTS.

WE'VE GOT TO CLIMB OUT
OF THE WATER'S REACH.

THEY LABORIOUSLY SCALED THE CLIFF REACHING ONE OF THE OPENINGS EVEN AS THE WATER FOUND ITS OWN LEVEL BELOW.

WE'RE SAFE — BUT STRANDED UP HERE. ALTHOUGH THE RAIN HAS STOPPED THERE'S NO TELLING HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE FOR THE WATERS TO FALL.

AT LEAST WE'VE GOT A FOOD SUPPLY. THIS FRUIT IS DELICIOUS.

DAVE EXPLORED THE REAR OF THE CAVE.

WATER! NO WAY OUT THIS WAY. BEST MAKE OURSELVES AT HOME.

THE WATER IS DROPPING FAST. ALREADY THE SUN IS SCORCHING THE LIFE OUT OF THESE PLANTS AND ALL WILL BE DESERT AGAIN.

DAYS PASSED, WITH DAVE AND ARTHURR GATHERING A SUPPLY OF FOOD FROM THE VEGETATION SURROUNDING THE CLIFF FACE.

WE MUST FIND A WAY TO STORE FRUIT IN THE COOL OF THE CAVE. THERE'S A UNIT IN THE SHIP WE COULD USE.

SOON THE RIVER BED WAS DRY AND FIRM ENOUGH TO ALLOW DAVE TO HEAD BACK TO THE SHIP. HE LEFT HIS COMPANIONS IN THE SAFETY OF THE CAVE—

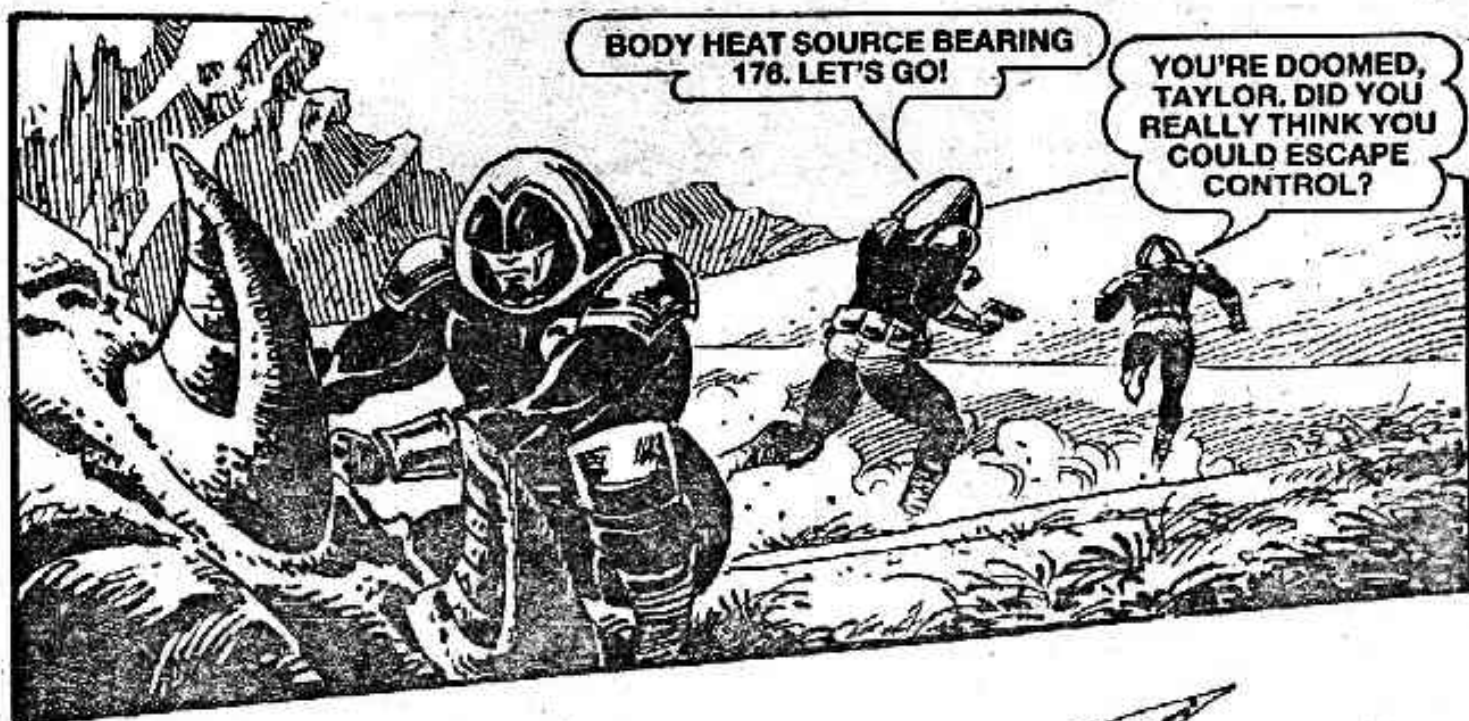
IT COULD BE DAYS, WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS BEFORE THE NEXT RAINFALL. THE LIFE ON THIS PLANET HAS EVOLVED TO COPE WITH IT, BUT WE'RE A DIFFERENT MATTER. WE'RE GOING TO NEED ALL THE HI-TECH HELP I CAN SALVAGE FROM THE SHIP ...



BUT EVEN AS DAVE REACHED THE SHIP—

OH, MY — THEY'VE
FOUND US.





BUT AS THEY REACHED THE TOP OF THE RISE—

HE'S VANISHED! REMEMBER HE
WAS ONCE A COBRA TOO...



DAVE WAS WELL AWARE OF WHAT HE FACED AND TRICKS THAT COULD FOOL THE SENSORS...

HE'S NEAR — I KNOW IT. BUT MY SENSORS DON'T SH-ARGH!

LOOKING FOR ME?

THE GAME OF CAT AND MOUSE BEGAN...

THE COBRA'S CRY BROUGHT HIS PARTNER RUNNING.

NO SIGN OF PURSUIT. HE'S GOT THE ADVANTAGE WITH HIS SENSORY GEAR. ALL I CAN RELY ON ARE MY HUMAN SENSES—

YOU GOT LUCKY, TAYLOR. BUT HERE'S WHERE YOUR LUCK RUNS OUT!

BUT DAVE'S SENSES WEREN'T GOOD ENOUGH.

DIE, RENEGADE!

BLASTERFIRE, THEN
SILENCE IN THE DESERT
WASTE—

COBRA 30 — BY THE
STARS, THERE WAS
A LOSS OF
CONTACT ...

I'M HIT BUT I — GRUNT
— MANAGED TO TRACK
DOWN TAYLOR AND
THE OTHERS. INFORM
CONTROL,
TERMINATION
ACCOMPLISHED.



AND SO—



CONFIRM SUCCESS OF
TERMINATION MISSION,
CONTROL. ONE COBRA
DEAD, ANOTHER
WOUNDED.



AT LAST THE FILE ON
TAYLOR AND DANT CAN
BE CLOSED. RETURN
IMMEDIATELY.



THERE WILL BE A FAT
BONUS WAITING FOR
US BACK HOME. NOW,
LET'S GET THAT
WOUND SEEN TO—

THAT WON'T BE
NECESSARY. IT WASN'T
ME WHO GOT HIT.



THE COBRA'S DRAW WAS LIKE
LIGHTNING BUT DAVE WAS EVEN
FASTER—

TAYLOR DIDN'T WASTE ANY TIME —

THE SHIP IS SET TO BLAST OFF ON
AUTOMATIC PILOT, HEADING WAY
OUT WHERE THIS BABY I'VE
TAKEN FROM THE ARMOURY WILL
DETONATE.



LIKE THEY SAY, ACCIDENTS ARE
ALWAYS HAPPENING IN DEEP
SPACE ...



AND SO—

DAVE, MY FRIEND. WHEN WE SAW
THE SHIP HEADING AWAY WE
ASSUMED THE WORST.

REPORTS OF MY DEATH
HAVE BEEN GREATLY
EXAGGERATED, ARTHUR.
COME — WE'VE A NEW LIFE
TO BUILD HERE AND
THERE'S NO TIME TO
LOSE...



It is now 60 star days
since we came to Uigo 3.
We have a good supply of
food now that father has
found a way to keep the plants
alive by using water from the
pool in the cave.
Mr. Taylor has just returned
from one of his treks. He's
found signs of people out there—
desert nomads, he calls them.
They have learned to survive
here just as we are doing—
in this world we now
call home.

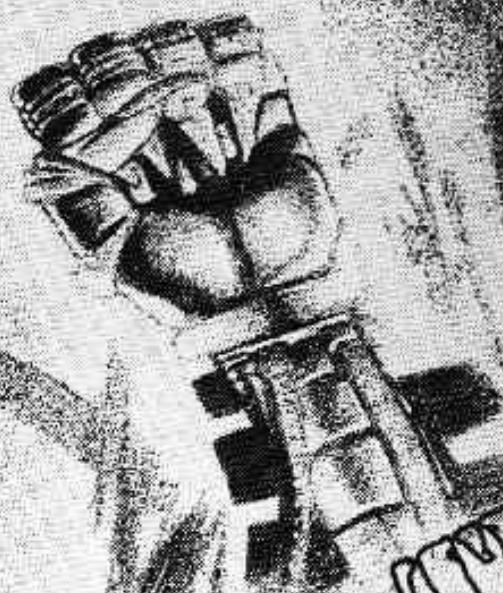
**DON'T
MISS**

**THIS MONTH'S OTHER
ACTION-PACKED
ADVENTURE**

STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 263

32p



**THE
KILLING
TRADE**



NOW ON SALE

COBRA

He wanted out, away from the never-ending slaughter. But he knew too much, had seen too much and early retirement wasn't part of the job description. Well, not as you and I know it, but retirement was possible — as a stiff, a corpse, dead, gone, no more, extinct. You see, he was a Cobra, a government appointed executioner and it was a job for life . . . or death. Yes, Dave Taylor was trapped — he didn't want to stay in, but he couldn't get out — alive.

